

Deadlines for 2006

JAN 1	Statutes take effect	JUN 5	Committee meetings may resume
JAN 4	Legislature reconvenes	JUN 15	Budget must be passed by midnight
JAN 10	Budget must be submitted by Governor	JUN 29	Last day for a legislative measure to qualify for the general election (Nov 7) ballot
JAN 13	Last day for policy committees to hear and report to fiscal committees fiscal bills introduced in their house in 2005	JUN 30	Last day for policy committees to meet and report bills
JAN 20	Last day for any committee to hear and report to the Floor bills introduced in their house in 2005	JUL 7	Summer Recess begins at the end of this day's session if Budget Bill has been enacted
JAN 27	Last day to submit bill requests to the Office of Legislative Counsel	AUG 7	Legislature reconvenes
JAN 31	Last day for each house to pass bills introduced in 2005 in their house	AUG 18	Last day for fiscal committees to meet and report bills to the Floor
FEB 24	Last day for bills to be introduced	AUG 21 – AUG 31	Floor Session only. No committees, other than Rules and conference committees, may meet for any purpose.
APR 6	Spring Recess begins at end of this day's session	AUG 25	Last day to amend bills on Floor
APR 17	Legislature reconvenes	AUG 31	Last day for each house to pass bills
APR 28	Last day for policy committees to hear and report to fiscal committees fiscal bills introduced in their house	AUG 31	Final Recess begins at end of this day's session
MAY 12	Last day for policy committees to hear and report non-fiscal bills introduced in their house to the Floor	SEP 30	Last day for Governor to sign or veto bills passed by the Legislature on or before Sept 1 and in his possession on or after Sept 1
MAY 19	Last day for policy committees to meet prior to June 5	OCT 2	Bills enacted on or before this date take effect on Jan 1, 2007
MAY 26	Last day for fiscal committees to hear and report to the Floor bills introduced in their house	NOV 30	Adjournment Sine Die at midnight
MAY 26	Last day for fiscal committees to meet prior to June 5	DEC 4	Convening of the 2007-08 Regular Session
MAY 30 – JUN 2	Floor Session only. No committee may meet for any purpose.	2007	
JUN 2	Last day for bills to be passed out of the house of origin	JAN 1	Statutes take effect

(tentative calendar)

Where to go for more information

There is a wealth of legislative information available online through the California State Senate's website at www.sen.ca.gov. You can track legislation, access bills, amendments, staff analyses, committee analyses and other legislative information. It also provides useful links to other related websites. It's a simple way to stay up-to-date on what's happening.

Ask your Senator's office for a copy of the brochure entitled *The California State Senate on the Internet*. The brochure is a guide to the website.



COMPLIMENTS OF Senator Elaine K. Alquist

DISTRICT OFFICE

100 Paseo de San Antonio, Suite 209
San Jose, CA 95113
tel (408) 286-8318
fax (408) 286-2338

senator.alquist@sen.ca.gov

CAPITOL OFFICE

State Capitol, Room 4088
Sacramento, CA 95814
tel (916) 651-4013
fax (916) 324-0283

Citizen's Guide to the Legislative Process

The State Legislature makes laws. However, many of us are unfamiliar with the lawmaking process and how we can influence it.

Perhaps you read something in the newspaper about a bill that was introduced in the California Legislature and you want to know more about it. This guide provides the information you need to keep informed. It also describes the process that bills follow to become enacted into law.

Contact the district office to find out about new legislation or to voice your opinion. Each Senator and Assemblymember maintains an office in the district. This office exists to help you, the constituent. It is just a telephone call away from everything you need to know about a bill, from when it will be heard to how to meet with your legislator to express your views.

STEP 1 How your idea becomes a bill.

All legislation starts off as an idea. These ideas can come from anyone. The process begins when either an individual or group persuades a member of the Legislature to author a bill. The legislator sends the idea and the language for the bill to Legislative Counsel where it is drafted into the actual bill. The drafted bill is returned to the legislator for review. Persons that originated the idea may also review it to ensure that the provisions they desire are in the bill. The bill is introduced at the Senate Desk if the author is a Senator, or at the Assembly Desk if the author is an Assemblymember. The bill is assigned a number and read for the first time, on the Floor of the House of Origin.

STEP 2 What to do when your bill goes to policy committee.

The bill then goes to the Senate or Assembly Rules Committee where it is assigned to a policy committee. You can find out where your bill is assigned by calling the author. Since bills are not heard in committee until 30 days after they have been introduced and printed, there is plenty of time to research a bill or contact your legislator to communicate your position on a bill.

Each bill must appear in the **Daily File** for four days prior to being heard in committee. The Daily File is the agenda of the day's business and the public notice of bills set for committee hearing. By checking the File, you can keep track of bills scheduled to be heard in committee. If you plan to testify at a hearing, it is a good idea to call the author or your legislator to make sure that the hearing of a bill has not been rescheduled. Sometimes bills are taken off the agenda at the last moment.

At this point, the role of the District Office should be emphasized. **The District Office is there to serve the needs of constituents.** The staff can be extremely helpful in making contacts and getting information from Sacramento. They can send copies of bills and committee analyses to you.

It is a good idea to schedule a meeting with your legislator while he or she is in the district. Communicate your concerns regarding legislation. Indicate that you want to work with the member's office on a particular issue.

Most bills generate support and opposition from a variety of groups. Find out who these groups are by calling the author's office where lists of letters and phone calls received on each bill are kept. A good strategy is to align yourself with the groups that hold your position and to work together to talk to the committee members before the bill is heard. Keep your letter and discussion with the legislators short.

When testifying before the committee, first state your name and the organization that you represent or indicate that you are a concerned citizen and state where you live. The members of the committee will be interested to hear what you have to say and usually do not question individual citizens who testify in the same way that they do lobbyists. **Keep your testimony short and to the point.**

STEP 3
What if your bill goes to a fiscal committee?

If the bill has a fiscal impact, it will be heard in either the Senate Appropriations Committee or the Assembly Appropriations Committee. At this point, you should inform the members of the committee why you support or oppose the bill based on a fiscal argument. The finance committees are concerned about fiscal impact and not policy considerations.

Try to review the staff analysis of the bill prepared by the committee, the Department of Finance, and/or the Legislative Analyst. Members of the fiscal committees read these analyses before they vote. You can get copies of the analyses by calling your District Office.

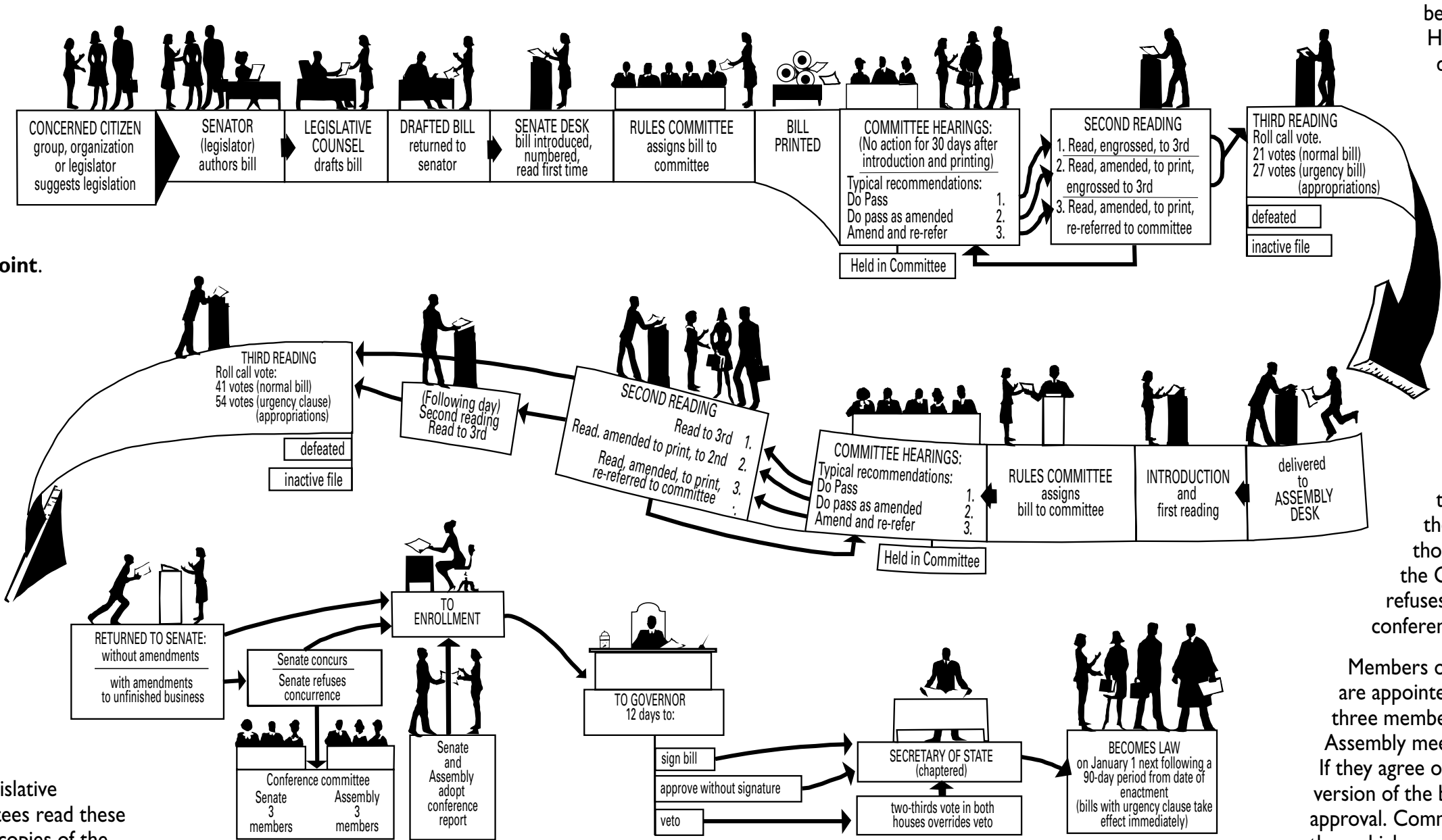
If you believe that the numbers or the fiscal impact of the bill are not correct as reported in these analyses, you should prepare your written comments before the committee meets. Copies of your written material should be available to pass out to the committee members at the hearing when you present your testimony.

After the bill passes the fiscal committee it is read for the second time on the Floor.

STEP 4
After your bill passes the House of Origin, it goes to the Second House.

Third Reading is the last stage a bill goes through in the House of Origin before it passes to the second House to go through the committee process all over again. On Third Reading, the author presents the bill for passage by the entire membership. Most bills require a majority vote (21 votes in the Senate and 41 votes in the Assembly), while urgency statutes and appropriation bills require a two-thirds vote (27 in the Senate and 54 in the Assembly).

At any time during the legislative process the bill may be amended, either in committee or on the Floor. After the amendments have been submitted to the author, the bill goes to another printing to reflect the changes that have



been made. The Senate or Assembly History records the amendment dates.

Amendments should be followed very carefully.

Amendments can be substantial or technical and may affect your position on the bill. Contact with the District Office can be helpful in keeping track of current versions of a bill. If you change your position on a bill due to a favorable or unfavorable amendment, you should inform the author and your legislator.

If a Senate bill is amended by the Assembly, or vice versa, and the House of Origin concurs in those amendments, the bill goes to the Governor. If the House of Origin refuses to concur, the bill goes to the conference committee.

Members of the conference committee are appointed by the Rules Committees: three members each from the Senate and the Assembly meet to negotiate the amendments. If they agree on a single version, the final version of the bill goes back to both Floors for approval. Communicate to your legislator or the author which amendments you prefer and why.

The conference committee meetings, particularly at the end of the two-year legislative session, are scheduled quickly and can be easily missed. You must **stay in close contact**

with the author's staff to stay on top of fast-breaking developments. It is also important to know who will be serving on the conference committee so you can inform them of your position.

STEP 5
You can still act after your bill goes to the Governor.

The Governor has 12 days to sign, approve without signing, or veto a bill. A letter or phone call to the Governor's office is appropriate to state your position on the bill.

If the bill is signed or approved without a signature, it goes to the Secretary of State to be chaptered. If the Governor vetoes the bill, a two-thirds vote in each house is needed to override the veto. The Governor's office releases veto messages which explain the veto. Veto messages can be obtained by calling the Governor's office.